

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims to cancel Claims 1-13 and add new Claims 14-31 as follows, this listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-13 (Canceled)

14. (New) An electric appliance comprising a plurality of operating elements which can be operated by a user, each operating element having an associated status display device, and comprising a control logic unit which is coupled to the operating elements to detect user operations and is set up to adjust an operating state of the electrical appliance according to the user operations, the control logic unit is furthermore set up to displace the status display of each operating element from which it is able to process a user operation into a first state according to an adjusted operating state, and to displace the status display of each operating element from which it is not able to process a user operation into a second state.

15. (New) The electric appliance according to claim 14, wherein the status display device is a light source for illuminating the allocated operating element in an illuminated state.

16. (New) The electric appliance according to claim 15, wherein the electric appliance includes a housing having a surface and the operating elements are arranged on the surface of the housing.

17. (New) The electric appliance according to claim 15, wherein the illuminated state is the first state of each status display device.

18. (New) The electric appliance according to claim 17, wherein a non-illuminated operating element has a color similar to the color of the surface of the surrounding housing.

19. (New) The electric appliance according to claim 15, wherein the control logic unit is furthermore set up to switch over all illuminated status displays into a non-illuminated state with a pre-determined delay after detecting the last actuation of an operating element.

20. (New) The electric appliance according to claim 19, wherein the control logic unit is set up to make the switchover undoable if the actuation of an arbitrary operating element is detected.

21. (New) The electric appliance according to claim 14, wherein the operating elements comprise capacitive proximity sensors.

22. (New) The electric appliance according to claim 20, wherein the electric appliance includes a housing having an interior chamber which can be closed by a door, the control logic unit being set up to make the switchover undoable if the opening of a door of the housing of the electric appliance is detected.

23. (New) The electric appliance according to claim 14, wherein an acoustic signal transmitter which delivers an audible signal when an actuation of an operating element has been detected.

24. (New) The electric appliance according to claim 14, wherein the operating elements are combined with an alphanumeric display in an assembly.

25. (New) The electric appliance according to claim 14, wherein the electric device includes a refrigerating appliance.

26. (New) A refrigerator comprising:

a housing having an interior chamber, a door coupled to the housing for opening and closing the interior chamber, and a control panel, the control panel including a plurality of buttons for receiving user input and a display window for displaying information;

each button including a proximity sensor detecting contact of the button by the user and a light source, the button being in an illuminated state when the light source is activated and a non-illuminated state when the light source is deactivated; and

a control logic unit electrically connected to the control panel and controlling operation of the refrigerator, the control logic unit receiving input signals from actuation of the buttons and sending output signals to control the display window and light sources, the control logic unit adjusting operation of the refrigerator in response to user input on the control panel, the control logic unit activating the light source of at least one of the buttons and deactivating the light source of another of the buttons in response to receiving input signals from one of the buttons.

27. (New) The refrigerator according to claim 26, wherein the housing includes a freezer compartment and a refrigerating compartment, the buttons including a first button for selecting operating features of the freezer compartment and a second button for selecting operating features of the refrigerating compartment.

28. (New) The refrigerator according to claim 26, wherein the buttons include an increment button for increasing a selected operating feature of the refrigerator and a decrement button for decreasing a selected operating feature of the refrigerator.

29. (New) The refrigerator according to claim 26, wherein the window display displays a list of menu items permitting the user to scroll through the menu items and the buttons include a select button for selecting the desired menu item.

30. (New) The refrigerator according to claim 26, wherein the window display includes a LCD display and a luminescent screen.

31. (New) The refrigerator according to claim 26, further comprising a door switch sensing if the door is open and connected to the control logic unit.